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longest-serving House member in Oregon's congressional delegation.

"These major federal investments in Portland will help to right the shameful wrongs inflicted on historically Black neighborhoods and to make our city a stronger and safer community for generations to come," Wyden said. "I am grat-

sive, vibrant community," Merkley said. "When I-5 was built, it cut through the heart of Portland's Black community, decimating the center of Black culture, politics, social life and business. As ODOT and the city of Portland embark on this long-overdue project to right this historic wrong, we need to continue to

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ified the teamwork to achieve these major resources totaling nearly a half-billion dollars has been accomplished for the Lower Albina neighborhood, and will keep battling to secure similar significant investments that contribute to keep Portland a great place to live and work.”

"Today marks a major milestone for the Albina community, signifying the federal government is committed to their vision of restoring Portland's historic Black neighborhood back into one cohe-

ensure it stays true to the Albina community's vision for the future.”

These awards come after Blumenauer brought U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg to Portland to learn about the history of Lower Albina and how a federal investment will help reconnect a neighborhood torn apart by the construction of the I-5 freeway more than a half century ago. Blumenauer also led Senators Wyden, Merkley in letters of support to the Department of Trans-



PHOTO COURTESY OF PROSPER PORTLAND

Community Grant Application to Open

A Community Livability Grant in the Central Eastside TIF District helped to fund improvements in Kickstand Comedy's new building. Represent a Non-Profit? Sign up to learn about the Community Livability Grant. Prosper Portland seeks grant proposals from non-profits for projects that foster vibrant and healthy neighborhoods and improve the prosperity of area residents and businesses. Funds are available through the Community Livability Grant (CLG) for permanent, real property improvements. Projects must add, expand, or improve physical space. Project bids must be submitted within three months and completed within one year of grant award. Applications open Monday, April 15. To learn more, visit <https://prosperportland.us/portfolio-items/community-livability-grant>.

portation for the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project and Broadway redesign.

"Today's news marks a momentous leap forward in the longstanding fight to rebuild Albina,"

said Winta Yohannes, executive director of the Albina Vision Trust. "The construction of Interstate 5 intentionally bisected Portland's Black community, paving the way for decades

of government-led urban renewal policies that decimated the wealth, well-being and place-based stability of our city's most marginalized. This catalytic federal investment represents

the beginning of a new chapter, one where government plays an active role in not only healing the harms of history, but investing in community-driven visions of a better tomorrow."

Monuments cont'd from pg 1

city arts program submits to the City Council and Historic Landmarks Commission.

Jones confirmed the city had commitments from the Oregon Historical Society and the Ladies of Mount Vernon Association to work as partners in monument reviews.

The policy guideline drew from similar policies in Chicago, San Francisco and Vancouver. It was created and refined through the Portland Monuments Project, which was bolstered by a \$350,000 grant the city received from the Mellon Foundation last year. Meanwhile, Portland's city arts program worked with Lewis & Clark College to create the Portland Monuments and Engagements Process Committee, which issued a public engagement report around monuments and memorials around Portland.

"It's important to note that if a monument were removed, such as the case of the five from 2020, the report would require further public engagement activities and the addition of interpretive and educational elements to the monuments, if they were removed by public request and recommended for return,"

Ryan said.

But some council members had reservations about the policy.

Mayor Ted Wheeler called the policy "potentially divisive" during the Feb. 28 meeting.

“The events of 2020 only underscore the city’s need for a more structured approach

"I think it would be a thankless task to serve on this committee," he said. "Let me give you an example: Abraham Lincoln. I think he was a great leader. But I know for a fact that there's people in this community who do not think that, they have very different opinions than I do on the greatness of Abraham Lincoln. How is a committee going to be able to resolve that conflict? It's a question of history and perspective, background, tradition...How does a committee resolve that conflict?"

Jones pointed out that during the development of the South Park Mas-

ter Plan, members of the Indigenous and Black communities were invited to weigh in and overwhelmingly stated there should be more public monuments honoring Indigenous and Black community members.

"But also when these monuments are up that have already been erected, (respondents said) they should also have greater context and clarity that talks about the full story and honors the times in which people lived, because it's easy for us to look back in time and criticize the behaviors of folks today, but we also need to be able to talk about the world in which they lived at the same time."

Commissioner Rene Gonzales expressed concern about a mob mentality taking over the review process.

"How do we allow citizens of Portland to speak out on a particular monument they find objectionable, but don't make decisions by the mob breaking things down?" he said. "When I look at this language, what we're partially responding to is what occurred in 2020, and you have - depending on how you describe it - protestors, vandals, the mob, making decisions about what statues they

found objectionable, a relatively small group getting to make that decision for everyone else."

Both Jones and Ryan emphasized that the policy did not condone criminal activity.

"What this seeks to do is provide an avenue for people to know that there is actually a process to express these complaints to the city and encourage them to use that process, versus vandalism or criminal behavior," Jones said.

Some public testimony shared Gonzales' concerns. But local mother Emma Colburn told the council, "When I'm out and about with my family, monuments to settler culture intrude into our afternoon."

Colburn argued the new process was particularly onerous to marginalized communities.

"It's weird to task disadvantaged members of the community with the burden of convening a volunteer commission to explain to your body, who is sitting on payroll, why it is harmful to public health and inconsistent with public opinion and just generally morally inappropriate to keep erect such statues," she said.

VP Harris Announces Landmark Childcare Reforms to Alleviate Financial Strain on Working Families

By Stacy M. Brown, NPA Newswire

In a move towards easing the financial burden on working families, Vice President Kamala Harris unveiled a comprehensive set of measures to lower childcare costs and provide crucial support for ear-

ly educators. The White House noted in a Fact Sheet that the initiative aligns closely with President Biden's historic Executive Order on Care. The White House said the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) finalized a rule that bolsters the Childcare & Development

Block Grant (CCDBG) program, a cornerstone for childcare assistance benefiting over a million families monthly.

Under the new rule, families participating in CCDBG will now face a cap on co-payments, limiting them to no more than 7% of their income. Administration officials

asserted that the move is expected to alleviate the significant financial strain that high co-payments have placed on working families, particularly those with low incomes. The HHS projects that more than 100,000 families will see their co-payments reduced or eliminated due to these

reforms.

Moreover, the rule urges states to eliminate co-payments entirely for families facing specific challenges, such as those with disabilities, experiencing homelessness, in foster care, in Head Start, and families at or below 150% of the federal poverty level.

Financial relief is not limited to families alone. Officials said the rule also addresses the challenges faced by childcare

providers. States must now pay CCDBG providers more fairly and on time, which is designed to improve financial stability for approximately 140,000 childcare providers. This change is anticipated to incentivize more providers to participate in the CCDBG program, leading to a broader range of childcare options for families.

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